# Study of Jacob - Part 1

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0:00] The Lord's blessing will turn to the portion of scripture we read, Genesis chapter 24, verse 54, and verse 58, verse 58, and they called Rebekah and said to her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Now in this chapter we have an account of the way in which Abraham found a wife for his son Isaac. And there are two particular themes which dominate the whole chapter, and they are prayer and faith. And if you look at the chapter closely, you'll see how these two things keep reoccurring, the importance of faith and prayer.
And you see them in the lives of the four main characters in the chapter. Abraham, Eliezer his steward, Isaac his son, and particularly perhaps Rebekah, Rebekah, who is going to be his son's wife.
Now I want to look with you at faith and prayer in the lives of these four as we have them in the chapter, paying perhaps particular attention to this woman, Rebekah.
Now take first Abraham. The chapter opens by telling us that he's an old man and well stricken or advanced in years. In fact, he is considerably far over a hundred years old at this point in his history.
[2:08] The Lord has blessed him, we are told in verse 1. He's blessed him spiritually in his soul. He's come through many trials, many temptations, and the Lord has made him a stronger Christian as time went on.

And the Lord has prospered him materially. He was a very rich man coming into the land of Canaan, and he's now richer still. The Lord has blessed him with riches.
The only thing that appears missing in his life is that Isaac, his son, has no wife. And what makes that situation more demanding is this, that he is not allowed to marry a Canaanite.
He must not marry the daughters of the heathen or the idolaters that are round about them in the land. And neither must he go back out of the land of promise to take a wife from anywhere else. These two things are prohibited. And as time goes on, Abraham becomes more and more perplexed and more and more burdened with the unmarried state of his own son.
[3:11] After all, it is through Isaac that the Messiah is one day to enter into the world. And the Messiah is his own hope for salvation, and the Messiah is the only hope of salvation in the world.

And therefore it is of importance that Isaiah be married and that he have a child. Now what does he do about it? Well, he takes his servant, a man called Eliezer of Damascus, and he brings him into his chamber, and he asks him to solemnly put his hand underneath Abraham's thigh.
Now that was a particular solemn form of oath-taking, which Abraham binds Eliezer with. And the oath is straightforward. He says to him to swear that he will not take a wife to Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites, but that he will go back to his own country and to his own family and take a wife to his son Isaac.
Now it appears that somehow Abraham figures that this is the way in which God's promise is to be fulfilled. The servant is to return to Haran, where he himself dwelt some time before, not to Ur of the Chaldees, but to Haran, the halfway house between Ur and the Promised Land, and he's to go back there to some of Abraham's relatives, and there he's going to find a young woman for Isaac to marry.
Now the servant says, well, that's very well, but what if she refuses? And Abraham says, if she refuses, you are clear from the oath. It doesn't bind you anymore. But Abraham is confident that the girl will be found and that she will come who will marry Isaac.
[5:02] Now, where is the faith here in Abraham's part? Now, this is an important question because faith is always a response to God's leading and guidance.

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Faith isn't a complete shot in the dark in that way at all. Faith looks at something the Lord has said. And however much the darkness connected with that thing that the Lord has said, faith goes out and goes forward.
Faith is always a response to the word of God. But where is the word of God here? Well, friends, I don't believe that God spoke to Abraham directly here about this matter.
In other words, he didn't speak to him in a dream or in a vision. It wasn't a matter of God coming to him, even in the form of an angel, and giving him a communication. But God did clearly indicate to Abraham what he should do, and he did it in this way.
God spoke to him in providence, in two significant events, two significant events which took place at the one time.
[6:10] Now, the first event occurs at the end of chapter 22, where we're told at verse 20, that it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she has born children to your brother Nahor.

Now, this perhaps may have been the first communication that Abraham received from the rest of the family back in Haram. And Nahor's wife has born children. And not only that, but there are grandchildren, one of whom is this girl, Rebecca.
So that's, you could say, good news from a far country. And it comes to Abraham when he is old and when he is worried about this precise question. The other event was a sad event in Abraham's own home, when his wife, Sarah, died.
Now, however much Abraham was hurt by that, and he was greatly hurt in that bereavement, so was his son, Isaac. And in fact, there's a verse here, right at the end of chapter 24, that tells us that Isaac was particularly grieved at his mother's death.
And Isaac brought her, this is the last verse, verse 67, And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebecca, and she became his wife, and he loved her.
[7:35] And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Now, there is very often a bond between the son and the mother in this kind of way.

And you can tell from Isaac's whole temperament and Isaac's whole history that he was particularly close to his mother and his mother to him. And it left himself desolate when his mother passed away.
Now, these two events came together in Abraham's experience just at the time when he was anxious concerning his son Isaac. And so God, in providence, spoke to his servant.
Now, that is important, my friend, because God still speaks to us and speaks to us very, very clearly in providence. Now, some people despise that, and some people say that providence is an unsure or an unsafe guide.
Well, I don't agree with that at all. If you are in the way, the Lord will lead you. And if you come to a certain situation in your life where you're perplexed or you're unsure about the way, and let's say two things happen which seem to point in a direction, you should be as confident of that if you are prayerful and in the way as you would be supposing an angel had come down from heaven and told you the thing.
[8:58] God doesn't have to put a bit or a bridle in your mouth to yank you one side or another. You should be spiritually sensitive enough just to watch the touch of his hand. Now, Psalm 123 says that the servant says that his hand is on, that his eye is on the hand of his master.

The master doesn't even have to speak. If the servant really loves his master, then the touch of his hand is enough and he will go. Perhaps even the look of the eye is enough. No, let the Lord guide you by his eye, not by a bit or a bridle in your mouth.
And sometimes a bit or a bridle has to be put into our mouth because we don't listen and because we don't watch for the look of his eye or the movement of his hand, even the slightest flicker.
The word of God says that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, everything shall be established. And if you have two or three providences that are greatly pointing you in that direction, take it, boldly go out and accept it of the Lord and act upon it.
And he will not put you to shame or to confusion. And in many respects, some of the most wonderful guidances that you will ever receive as a Christian will be those which came to you in providence.
[10:14] When God so orders events that you are constrained to follow a certain path, you cannot but look at it and say, it is the Lord who has done it and it is a wonderful thing in my eyes.

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And Matthew Henry said, he who notes providences will have providences to note. As only those Puritans could say it. If you are really looking prayerfully for providences, providences will be given you and they will guide you and guide you clearly.
Now, his faith comes through in another way as well. And it's in this way that as well as responding to the providence of God clearly around him, he shows himself to be not content for Isaac to marry into the land and to become a powerful man in Canaan.
No, I say that and it's very important. Because it was one temptation that was continually before Abraham. He was a powerful man and the Canaanites knew he was powerful and respected him like that.
Would he throw away what made him distinctive in order to become more like them and more respected? Or would he keep himself separate, clean and pure and maintain the integrity of God's word and God's cause?
[11:46] Remember, for example, when the king of Sodom came to him and said, I'll give you, he says, the reward for helping us in this war. Genesis 14. And Abraham said to him, I won't take, he says, one single thing from you.

Not one thing, he says, in case anyone says that the king of Sodom made me rich. Abraham was always careful to maintain the separation that belongs to the child of God.
He was in Canaan, but he was never going to be off Canaan, and he was never going to be confused with the Canaanites. That's one thing for himself, but sometimes a man can guard himself and let go with respect to his children.
There's always a tendency in parents to indulge children, perhaps in a way in which they would not indulge themselves. Now as Abraham grows old, does he want Isaac to have the same kind of pilgrim existence?
All right, he's going to be rich, but is he going to have to move continually from pillar to post? Is he going to have to pitch his tent one day in Hebron, and then some days afterwards to move south, and then move back north again?
[12:56] Is he content for his son to be a pilgrim and a stranger in the land, in the way in which he himself was a pilgrim and a stranger in the land? Well, with this act, Abraham says, I want my son to be like myself.

I want my son to be a pilgrim and a stranger, and I won't indulge him, and I won't push him into the direction of the world. If I am careful to keep myself clean, how much more should I be careful to keep my children clean?
Now notice again this whole emphasis coming through in the word of God, that the man and woman of God views their seed as the gift of God, not to be put to a non-holy use, but to be put to a holy use.
This is the circumcised Isaac, or the baptized Isaac. Shall he take the holy vessel, and will he be content to marry him to one of the powerful princesses of the land? No.
He will be a pilgrim and a stranger in Canaan. Now don't underestimate this because Abraham was a very, very wealthy man. If you go back to chapter 23, for example, when Sarah is being buried, in verse 5, chapter 23 and verse 5, now this is when Abraham is wanting to buy the cave of Machpelah.
[14:26] He's wanting to buy a small section of the land to bury his wife in. Verse 5, and the children of Heth, now they were the Hittites, a very powerful and influential group in the Canaanites.

They answered Abraham, saying, Here is my Lord, thou art a mighty prince among us. In the choice of our sepulchers, bury your dead. None of us shall withhold from you his sepulcher, that you may bury the dead.
All the time, you see, there is the powerful flattery and the courting to bring Abraham to be like themselves, exactly like themselves. But when it comes to it, Abraham can just weigh out there 400 shekels of silver in verse 15, and he buys the land just like that.
When his nephew, Lot, was taken captive, Abraham sent a fighting squad after him to deliver Lot, a fighting squad that consisted of 300 fighting men of his own servants.
Now think of that. That was shortly after he moved from Ur of the Chaldees into Canaan. He could send a fighting force of 300 men to fight these people.
[15:38] Now that gives you some indication of the vast household that Abraham had. His resources in terms of cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and trained servants. Men and women, 300 fighting men.

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But all the time, Abraham holds on to God's word and always holds up the flag of separation. He is distinctive. He is a man of God and he will always keep the word of God.
How sorely we need people like that today. People who, even if God blesses with riches and with wealth and with power and with influence so that they become counsellors or prime ministers or MPs or what have you, they still hold the standard.
And they won't budge to the right or to the left but will keep to the word of God. So he wants the same for Isaac that he had for himself. And his faith comes through in this way too that he expects success from the whole venture.
Chapter 24. Now, it sounds in verse 8 as though he's unsure what's going to happen. Because he says in verse 8, if the woman will not be willing to follow you, you shall be clear from my oath.
[16:59] But Abraham only says that to assure the servant that he's not, as it were, going to be held responsible if the woman doesn't come back. But what does Abraham himself believe to be the case?

Well, you find that in verse 7 where he says that God, this is the last part of verse 7, God shall send his angel before you and you shall take a wife unto my son from thence.
The Lord, he believes, has spoken. And where the Lord speaks, there is no doubt on the part of Abraham. His angel will guide and lead you and you shall bring a woman to marry my son from thence.
There again is faith. He believes in the word of God. And faith expects success. Faith expects the word of God to be blessed.
Faith looks at what God has said and seeks to apply it to your own life and the life of others and will wait for an answer. That is faith. The belief which doesn't expect is not really worth calling a belief at all.
[18:07] So that is Abraham's faith. faith. And we believe he sends out his servant prayerfully until his servant comes back. Now let's look secondly at this man Eliezer, the servant of Abraham.

Now, he is obviously a good man himself. And he's a very humble man too. And his humility comes out in a roundabout way.
Because before Isaac's birth, he was Abraham's heir. Now that's important. Chapter 15 and verse 2 tells us that.
Abraham, before Isaac is born, is praying to God and he's pouring out his heart to God and saying, I still have no seed. He says, and the heir of my house is the servant Eliezer of Damascus.
Now, there's your key. You would think Eliezer would resent the very presence of Isaac in the household. You would think that Eliezer would be glad to be rid of Isaac or would be glad if Isaac could somehow be frustrated in his intentions.
[19:18] But it's not like that. He is a man of God. He exalts or exalts in the exaltation of Isaac. That relates to what I said in the morning.

Elizabeth was glad as a woman of God when Mary was exalted above her. And so is Eliezer. He is glad that Isaac is exalted above himself. That is again humility, a mark of the child of God.
Do you resent other people being given some, here's another person and God has given him great things materially. God has bestowed upon him great wealth. How do you feel about that?
Do you wish that these things would be taken away from him or that you had more than that person or are you content to say, well, I am glad that the Lord has showered these things upon him. I hope and pray they will be of benefit to him and used in the Lord's cause.
These things reveal the temper of your heart. They reveal whether you are a Christian in name only or whether you're a Christian in word and in deed. And Eliezer shows himself to be a man just like that.
[20:24] And you'll notice his diligence. He's diligent. In verse 33, he won't even sit down to eat meat in Rebecca's house until he's told them his errand.

Now notice how conscientious he is in his task. I wonder how many people who employ others are as confident as that in those whom they employ. That they're not time wasting or wasting their master's time or not bothering working when you should be working.
He is very conscious. He says, no, he says, I won't even eat until I've told you my business and until I state my master's work. Now, what I want to notice particularly in his life is his faith.
And that comes through in a particular prayer that he makes. And this prayer we're told in verse 12. Now, he arrives in Haran and it's late and he goes and he sits beside the well of the place.

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And it was the time when the woman came out to draw water from the wells. And these women used to have great communion and fellowship very often around a well. Now, he goes and he prays and says, Lord of my master Abraham, send me good speed and show kindness to me.
[21:50] I stand by the well. He says, and let this woman who says, I will water your camels also, let her be the one that is to be wife to my master Isaac.

In other words, he's going to ask a certain woman for a drink. And if the woman gives it to him and readily agrees to give it to the camels as well, that will be a sign that this woman is of God and she is to be the one to marry Isaac.
Now, you may say, well, that's a strange sign to ask for. A strange sign to ask for. And so, in some respects it is, but it has a particular meaning.
This servant is going to look for a woman who is showing signs of having the work of grace in her heart. That's what he's going to look for. And what he sets before her are very practical tests of hospitality.
What you would call Christian hospitality. First of all, kindness. This woman is not only going to be touched by the thirst of the man there, but her heart is going to go out to the animals which God himself has created.
[23:11] She will feel compassion even for the camels who have been bearing the burden, the ornaments, and who have walked day and night to arrive in Heron.

And she will offer to feed these beasts of burden and to water them. That will show her kindness that she is different to the hard-hearted people generally around her, that there is some thing, some good thing perhaps dwelling in her heart.
Now, of course, that isn't sufficient to reveal grace, but it's one little aspect taken together with other things. Another thing is this, industry, industry.
Christian men and Christian women should be industrious. And that goes with hospitality as well.
Now, I say that because you have ten camels here.
Now, as every child in here knows, camels have humps on their back. Apparently some have two, some have one. And like other kinds of animals, they have compartments in their stomachs.
[24:17] And two of the three compartments in the camel's stomach contain pouches that can be opened and shut by the camel, by the use of muscles. And these pouches contain a considerable amount of water, and of course that is why the camel can go for a very long distance without needing a drink of water.

Now, you can imagine the amount of water that ten camels would consume. And here is one woman on her own. And she volunteers not just to satisfy this man's thirst, but to give enough water to fill ten camels, and to make them ready for a journey the following day.
Now, again, she is wanting to serve this man. She is willing to serve, and she is hospitable. And these are very practical tests that this man is putting before this woman.
very, very practical tests. Abraham and Sarah were very hospitable people. Abraham used to sit at the door of his tent and wait for strangers to come. Lot did the same in Sodom.
He was hospitable. He used to wait at the gate to see if any stranger would pass by so that he could take him in and keep him in safety in that wicked and ungodly city. And here is a woman who is showing that the same kind of work may be going on in her soul.
[25:40] We'll come to that in a moment. By the way, it's just worth mentioning here that you always come across this kind of thing. People used to say for years that this was a proof that the scriptures were way off in the sense that you had camels inserted into the lives of the patriarchs when camels weren't domesticated until about a thousand years later.

And then, of course, as time passes they discover other literature and other evidence which leads to the conclusion that camels were domesticated before the time of the patriarchs.
You always find this. It doesn't matter with whatever subject you are dealing with in the Old Testament. It's the same with Joseph shaving. This was another archaeological problem. All these things were problems until it's gradually discovered that the Bible is true.
And I say again, why is it that whenever one piece of history clashes with the Bible, why is it always the Bible that has to be wrong? When every single time further evidence has always acquitted the Bible and declared it right.
In any case, the camels were domesticated a long time before the patriarchs were in the world.
Now, I suppose it raises a question in your mind, should I ask a sign of the Lord?

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[26:56] Well, at least it asks the question to my own mind anyway. Is it right at any time to ask a sign of God as this man asked the sign? Well, friends, it's difficult to answer that question whole heartedly or categorically one way or another.

But I wouldn't bring myself to say that it was wrong anyway. I would not. Providing, and these are important, providing your asking of the sign is not rooted in unbelief.
That's an important proviso. Some people ask a sign, and the real reason behind the sign is that you don't actually believe what God is saying.
Now, as I said in the morning, Mary got a sign that she was to conceive because she didn't ask for a sign. Other people asked for a sign in the Old Testament and never got one.
the important point being that if your request comes from unbelief, it shall not be answered. God just does not.
[28:12] And that's categoric. That is categoric. God does not give signs to unbelief. Now, I often hear people wanting a sign or wishing they had some kind of sign that what God says in the Bible is true.

or even wanting a sign that God is there. Well, you just won't get that. You won't get it. The only people who get powerful signs or powerful providential indicators from the Lord are those who humble themselves to believe.
Believing gets a sign. Unbelief does not get a sign. And as I said in the morning, God hides things continually from the wise and the prudent and he reveals things unto babes.
So, providing it doesn't come from unbelief. And the other thing is this as well. If you are asking for a sign because you don't have sufficient spiritual discernment to discern the thing, or because you're not putting the work into knowing the will of God, then you cannot expect a sign again in your own life.
And that again is an important proviso. It would be very easy just to sit back and say, well, give me a sign that this is what I should do. Or here are two alternatives. Give me a sign and show me which way I should go.
[29:32] No, you mayn't expect that. If you are in the way, walking in the way, and if you are diligently wanting to know the will of God, and you are still in a cloud over it, then I would believe that it is right to ask for a sign or for an indicator.

And it's in conditions like that that you will find two or three providences speaking like witnesses and guiding your soul. And you'll notice, by the way, that this man's prayer is answered before it's finished.
Verse 15, And it came to pass before he had done speaking that, behold, Rebecca came out who was born to Bethlehem. Before the call, I will answer.
Oh, my friend, the blessings of obedience in the Christian life. I wonder if you've lost that because of disobedience. What does obedience bring you in the Christian life?
Well, it brings you clear, distinct answers to prayer. Obedience brings you the close, living fellowship of the Lord. Obedience brings you providences that you can see and that you can note and that you can understand.
[30:43] Disobedience does away with all these things, and you stagger on from day to day without a real living word from the Lord. Now, this man is in the way, and that's a beautiful expression, I being in the way the Lord led me, that contains a lot.

He's in the way in his life generally. He's in the way all the time. The Lord leads him. The Lord shows him. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. He will show to them his covenant. And that's the kind of person who gets this kind of answer to his prayer. The word is not out of his mouth. Before the answer is in front of his very eyes. So here is a man of faith and of prayer also.
Now, let's turn to Rebecca. Now, she's a daughter of Bethuel. She's the granddaughter of Nahor, and he was Abraham's brother.
Now, she's always referred to as an idolater, but personally, I'm not too happy with that at all, for several reasons. First of all, let me say this generally, that I believe this woman to be in the same kind of spiritual condition as Rahab was when the messengers came to her.
[31:58] Now, we looked at that last Sunday evening. She was a woman who was coming to faith. The light was breaking in on her soul, and the Lord sent messengers to her to bring her completely to the light.

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She had heard of God, and she was in the process, you could see, of embracing him. And God sends two messengers to give her more light, and the hour of decision comes, and Rahab commits herself to the Lord and to his cause.
Now, I would believe that you should put this woman, Rebecca, into exactly the same category as that. And I've got several reasons for saying that.
in the first place, why would Abraham bother sending the servant to that family, unless there was some indication in Abraham's own mind that things were different in that family?
After all, what's to choose between one idolater and another? If they're all idolaters, then what's the difference? But Abraham says, send them to my family in Haran.
[33:02] Go there and find a wife for my son. He suspects, we'll see in a moment why, he suspects that something is changing in the heart of at least one person in that family.

And then again there's this, ever since Abraham was called in that family, that family was never the same again. In fact, even as Rebecca herself was growing up, I'm quite sure that she was hearing stories, almost legends to her, of her great uncle who had left the family home a long time before and who had made his way far into Canaan because he believed that the Lord was leading him and the Lord was guiding him.
He was going, she heard, to the promised land. And the name of Abraham would be pronounced with some kind of reverence and awe in the house of her own father. He was her granduncle.
And of course, her great grandfather went on that migration also, Terah, the father of Nahor and Abraham. And she would have been raised up with these stories herself.
And from the moment Abraham, his father and nephew, left that family, that family was different. Could never be the same again. The word of God had broken into it powerfully and made a separation.
[34:26] And those who are left behind may have been left behind, but they were never ever the same again. They were never the same again. Now, there's a proof of that.

And the proof of this is this. Where are they living? Well, strangely enough, they're living in Haran. Now, that is very important. Because Abraham left them in Ur.
Just to explain it perhaps to those who don't know it too well, Abraham's whole family were living far east in Ur of the Koldees. Abraham was called by God and his life was changed and he took a large part of the family to Haran first of all.
And then he moved into the promised land. Now, the only person who stayed behind in Ur was the grandfather of this woman, Rebekah. But, when Abraham sends his servant to get the daughter, where are they living?
They're living in Haran. What does that tell you? They have moved. They are following in the footsteps, you could say, of their father, Abraham.
[35:40] The word of God may have taken a long time to work in their hearts, may have taken a long time to germinate or the seed to flower, but it has done so. They have upped their stakes and they have moved and they have gone part of the way to the promised land.

In other words, this spiritually represents those who are seeking, those who are no longer at a standstill, in their lives, but those who are moving and looking for something spiritual, looking for life and looking for the faith of their forefather, Abraham.
And that is the kind of condition that this woman is in at this time. Now, my friends, I want to ask you a question, and that is simply this.
Fairly often I've mentioned the east and the west. Going east in the scriptures seems to represent going towards ungodliness. moving west represents moving towards the promised land and moving towards the Lord.
Are you moving east or west? Just which way are you moving spiritually in your own life tonight? Are you further from God than you were last year or are you closer to God?
[36:46] Have you stayed in Ur of the Chaldees or have you gone further east or have you moved west to Haran? Are you beginning to walk in the footsteps of those who have embraced the covenant and those who love the Lord and those who have been born again and powerfully changed?

And that's a question to you of the utmost importance. You know, God may have broken into your own family and broken into it powerfully and one person in your family may have been powerfully changed by the Spirit of God.

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Now, where are you? Where are you? Are you where you were or are you in a better place? Well, this woman and her family were in a better place.
They were going west and they were seeking the Lord and none more so than the granddaughter, this young woman, Rebecca. And how the church needs young women in Israel, young women who are powerfully dedicated to the cause of the Lord.
And this woman is awakening to life and to faith. By the way, you'll notice in some verses here that they use the name Jehovah or the name Lord.
[38:01] Laban, for example, says to the servant, come into the house, thou blessed of the Lord. The word is Jehovah. That tells you that they're leaving their idolatry behind and they are moving towards the promised land.

Now, I'm sure Abraham prayed very often for his own family. for a long time he heard nothing about them and then suddenly he hears that they are fruitful and that they are living in Haran.
And that put Abraham back on his knees more than ever before because he senses that there is movement there and he says to the servant, I hear, he says, the sound of a going in the top of a mulberry trees.
Send your servant. Go, he says, my servant, and find the daughter and bring her here to Isaac because the Lord is at work.
Now, for Rebecca, she is in the same kind of situation as Rahab was in Jericho. She is coming to the light and she is groping towards faith and she is beginning to worship the Lord.
[39:10] If only she had more light, if only she had more knowledge, if only she had more understanding. God finds these people. If you are in that condition, God will find you.

He will find you in the preaching of the gospel. He will find you in the quietness of your soul and he will send an arrow. He will send a messenger and he will speak to you. And that is precisely the way that this messenger came here to Rebecca.
It is not just a matter of finding a wife for Isaac. It is a matter of saving the soul of this woman. And that is what the Lord does. And he alone can do it. He sends and he crosses land and sea to find one scattered sheep to bring her into the fold.
So Eliezer is to her what the two messengers were to Rahab who we looked at last week. They gave Rahab more light on the gospel. And this man gives this woman more light on the gospel.
Now, after he tells his errand, Laban answers and says, well, he says, from what you've told us, the way that you've been led and the way this happened to you at the well, he says, we feel that this is the work of Jehovah.
[40:25] And there's one more hurdle to be crossed. It wasn't just a matter, as it were, of the brother or the father or the head of the household allowing her to go.

There was also the strictly stipulated matter of her own consent. very often these arranged marriages are frowned upon because it's assumed that there was constraint involved.
Now, I'm told that that was a very rare thing, that that was not really the way that arranged marriages were to work, that there was always the matter of consent on the part of the parties, that the arrangement was largely made by the fathers or mothers, but that the consent was there on the part of both parties.
And that is why they turn to this woman and they say, wilt thou go with this man? Wilt thou go with this man? And what is that to her?
Well, this is the day of reckoning for her. She must either cross the Rubicon or she must stay where she is. She must remain in a halfway house forever or she must go and she must go to Abraham.
[41:37] She must go to the father of the faithful and she must cast in her lot with the people of God. That is what the question means. Wilt thou go with this man? It means so much.

Now, there's a little detail here if you go back a few verses. At verse 26, when Eliezer is talking to Rebekah at the well, notice what happens.
In verse 26, the man bows his head and he worships the Lord. Now, Eliezer can hardly believe really the answer to his own prayer. It's so clear. He bows his head and he worships the Lord there and then in front of Rebekah.
And that's important, in front of Rebekah. What effect does the prayer have on her? She runs and goes straight back to her mother's house. Why? Well, there was something in the prayer.
You have the prayer recorded in verse 27. Here's the servant, he bows his head and he says, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham. She can hardly believe what she has heard.

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[42:43] My master Abraham. Here is the man almost to her of myth or legend. Here is the man who left so many years ago called by the God that she was now beginning to embrace in her own life.

What does she see in this man? She sees nothing but a messenger of God calling her to follow Abraham. And when that messenger turns round or when they turn round and they say, will thou go with this man?
That is the way it comes to her. Will you follow Abraham? Abraham went out not knowing where he was going. That was faith. And that was what this question was to her. Will you go to the household of a man you have heard of but never seen in your life?
Will you marry his son whom you have never heard of nor seen? Will you go out and trade your security for insecurity? Will you trade everything you've got and everything that is certain for things that are uncertain?
Will you go with this man? And that is the essence of the gospel. That is what the gospel is saying to you tonight. Will you go with this man, this man Christ, the man Christ Jesus?
[43:50] Will thou go with him? Will you trade your security, perhaps your friends, your comfort, the very stability of your life, for who knows, total uncertainty?

you have to go out not knowing where you're going. All you have to know is that God is asking you to go there. You're going outside the camp, you're going to have to bear his reproach, you have to be a Christian and to live a Christian life, and you have to walk in Christian paths, and these are crooked paths.
You don't know where they're going to lead or where they're going to take you, but wilt thou go with this man? That is the question. Now, Rebecca had slept on these things.
She had slept on the prayer that the servant had made. She had slept on her own history, her own life, and the great migration. She slept on the fact that she was seeking the Lord, and now the Lord seemed to be seeking her, and to be searching her out.
And that is why in the morning she stands in front of the mall, and she says, I will go. I'll go. I'm not staying where I am anymore, she says. I know who is calling me, and I am going.
[45:02] I have no idea, she says, what lies before me, but I am going. Will you not, my friend, go out the same way? Will you not take the cross upon your back?

Will you not hear God calling you, and will you not become a Christian? Will you not believe and embrace Christ, and go out not knowing where you are going?
that is her response, and the Lord blesses it to her. Now, lastly, and very, very briefly, Isaac, and I mean briefly, he just comes before us at the close of the chapter.
He's moved to Kadesh, he's got a little independence from his father, as it were, he's building up his own settlement there, but there's faith and prayer, very briefly.
Faith is there, because he's still submitting to his father's will for his life, because he knows that his father is the chosen vessel of God. He doesn't rush out to seek a wife for himself, he seeks the guidance of his father in the matter, and even if it takes a long time, he waits until his father has life done it.
[46:19] Now, Isaac's obedience is always remarkable. There he is as a 17-year-old boy, climbing up Mount Moriah, carrying the wood on his back, and when he discovers that he's to be the sacrifice, he lies down and he lets his father bind him.

Notice the obedience, notice the faith. Same thing is true here, he commits his life to Abraham, his father. Then, lastly, notice his prayer in verse 63.
Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide, and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. Now, he went to meditate.
Now, meditation, of course, involves prayer. What was he praying about? Well, it doesn't require any stretch of the imagination to conclude that he was praying about a wife, and about the mission of Eliezer to the family of Abraham.
And he's asking the Lord to lead to him, to lead him to a help meet that will be suitable for him, a godly woman, so that they can together raise a godly seed that will bring the Messiah into the world.
[47:30] And notice again, before he's finished speaking, his prayer is answered. Same thing again, godly obedience brings great results. He lifts up his eyes, and behold, the camels are coming.

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What a great god. He moves heaven and earth to bring his purposes to pass. He moves heaven and earth to find a soul lost in darkness, dead in sin.
And he brings her together with this man to bring the seed of God into the world. It is a great god, my friends, that we have in the scriptures.
A great, great god. And the question for you tonight is will you go with this man? Don't stay where you are in the plains. Go with this man.
And as the Lord enables us, we begin after the communions to look at the life of their sons, Jacob and Esau. May the Lord bless this meditation on his word.
[48:34] O gracious God, we pray thee to draw near to us with power, and apply to us the word that was spoken and proclaimed.

We pray that thy word would come to us in power and in much assurance from the Holy Ghost, persuading us to go with this man.
For Christ's sake. Amen.

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